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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture  
A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, February 7, 1925. 12

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Hello folks. I wish I could look into each and every one of your homes today and see what you are doing. If the letters that are coming to me by the hundreds these days are any indication I would say that a lot of you have taken your pens and pencils in hand to write Uncle Sam a letter. Being one of Uncle Sam's workers I'm getting my share of these letters and about three-fourths of the writers are asking for advice as to what crops to plant the coming season. I've often heard it said that "It's easy to give advice but not so easy to follow it." I want to tell you that it is not easy to give advice and I go home these evenings worn to a frazzle with trying to give the writers of the letters sound advice that I think will help them out of their dilemma, for dilemma it is for many a family nowadays.

As a rule my first recommendation for "taking the dilemma by the horns", is to grow a good garden and produce just as much of the family living at home as possible. If we have plenty to eat and enough fuel to keep us warm these cold days we can get along fairly well, but most of the people who are writing us letters these days are looking for some means of making a little extra money, money to buy clothing and things for the house, money to repair buildings, to pay taxes and interest and a lot of obligations that are pressing. In this connection I want to warn a lot of you about going into the growing of marginal crops just because certain of these products may be relatively high in price at present. That old law of supply and demand is still working and it doesn't pay to build up an uncomfortable surplus of anything. I have often said that about the only market that is not oversupplied is the farmer's dinner table and there is always room for improvement there, especially in variety. I heard from a lady the other day who had been "snowed in" for several days recently. "How did you get along for food", she was asked. "Oh, we had plenty such as it was" she replied, "but we didn't have much of a variety, mostly ham and chicken and canned goods."

The fact that horseradish is bringing the highest price in many years has caused hundreds of farmers, and others, to write to us for information as to the culture of horseradish. Now it happens that about sixty percent of our supply of horseradish roots for grating is grown around St. Louis, Mo. and last season the drought in that section cut the horseradish crop very short and up went the prices. In case we have a normal season this year in the sections where the horseradish roots are grown we will probably have a normal crop and down will go the prices. Don't let these marginal crops and their price fluctuations fool you. Just at present we are getting many inquiries about growing water cress and garlic, two more of the marginal crops of which it only takes a few acres to supply our market requirements. The proportion of letters asking for information about growing peas, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cabbage, onions and the other garden standbys is relatively small, but I will say in this connection that we are getting a great many inquiries for information on home gardens, especially about starting early plants and early dates for planting, all of which indicates that our folks are anxious to get started in their gardens and to produce

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plenty of food for home use.

With that to guide me I am going to spend the remaining minute or so that I have today in just mentioning some of the most important things for us to consider as we plan our gardens this season. First, if you do not already have a bed of asparagus in your garden I would advise planting one this spring, especially in the northern two-thirds of the country. You southern gardeners should not overlook the spinach, turnip greens, mustard greens, early cabbage, early onions and as the season advances the snap beans, corn, tomatoes and a lot of other things. Another important consideration is the use of disease resistant varieties that can be grown on soils that are infected with the wilt and other diseases. For that reason we recommend the wilt-resistant tomatoes including the Pritchard, Break O'Day and Marglobe. The tomato wilt disease is present in the soils of the south pretty generally and in many sections of the north and as these varieties are just a little superior to most other varieties, wilt or no wilt, they are the tomatoes to plant in the home garden at least. Then there is that miserable "yellows" disease of cabbage that causes the leaves to turn yellow, droop and finally the whole plant dies. The remedy is to plant one of the Wisconsin yellows resistant strains especially on land where the disease was present last year.

One more suggestion, strawberries will grow most everywhere and strawberries are the first fruit of the season to ripen, so why not set aside a piece of ground about 30 by 60 feet in size and have a fine bed of strawberries. In case you don't know how to grow good strawberries, just drop me a post card with your name and address written plainly and the word "strawberries" and I will send you a little bulletin telling you how to grow them and the kind to grow. Thanks and goodbye and I'll be seeing you again soon in your garden.

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